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NEW LIGHT ON THE ORIGINS OF THE WORLD WAR, I. BERLIN AND VIENNA, TO JULY 29

AFTER the revolution of November 9, 1918, the new German republic at once made Karl Kautsky assistant secretary of state for foreign affairs, and authorized him to edit the documents which would throw light on the origins of the World War. By March, 1919, he and his assistants had carefully copied, dated, arranged, and annotated a mass of papers contained in eighteen volumes in the archives of the Foreign Office. He was eager to publish this material as soon as possible during the Peace Conference at Versailles, in order to convince the world how completely the new régime had broken with the old Junker rulers of 1914. But the Ebert government feared that Kautsky's known opposition to the Kaiser and the old imperial government might lay his edition of the documents open to the charge of party bias. It therefore delayed its publication until it could be examined and edited by three scholars of different political views, Dr. Walter Schücking, Count Montgelas, and Professor Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. These co-editors found that Kautsky had done his work most conscientiously and carefully. Meanwhile, however, in June, the Ebert government published a *White Book, Germany Guilty?*, drawn up by Hans Delbrück, the well-known historian, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Count Montgelas, and Max Weber. It was intended as a reply to the report which the Allied commissioners at Versailles had made on the responsibility for the war.¹ But as it repeated many of the old arguments of 1914, trying to exculpate Germany and throw the blame on Austria, it had quite the opposite effect from convincing the world that the new Germany had completely broken with the past. This *White Book*, as Kautsky bitterly complained, was nothing but a "white-washing book". He felt all the more aggrieved because he himself had already written a book on the causes of the war, quoting large extracts from the documents, but had agreed not to make it public until after the documents had been officially published. In December, 1919, after many delays, the documents were finally published by the co-editors, in four volumes.² They comprise 1123 docu-

¹ *Deutschland Schuldig? Deutsches Weissbuch über die Verantwortlichkeit der Urheber des Krieges* (Berlin, 1919).

² *Die Deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch: Vollständige Sammlung der von Karl Kautsky zusammengestellten Amtlichen Aktenstücke* (Charlotten-

ments, of which 937 are given *in extenso* and the remainder in a sufficiently full summary. Included also are the complete texts of the secret Triple and Rumanian alliances, translations of which have recently been edited by Professor Coolidge.³ There is no reason to believe that any material documents which passed through the German Foreign Office have been deliberately withheld by the editors.⁴ The editors have wisely refrained, absolutely, from all subjective comment, but have conveniently given cross-references, indexes, and all existing official indications as to the exact day, hour, and minute, when despatches were sent and received. This precise information, unfortunately lacking in the various colored books issued at the beginning of the war, now makes it possible to determine just how much an official knew when he took an action; it enables one to judge with nicety as to the motives, honesty, and ability of the men in charge of Germany in 1914. Most interesting from the point of view of the Kaiser's psychology are his numerous marginal annotations, which have been much featured in the press, and which led Kautsky to many jibes at royalty revealed in *Unterhosen*.⁵

As publication of the official compilation of documents was still delayed beyond the date agreed, Kautsky's publishers at last lost patience and published in November, 1919, the work which he had written in the preceding May, *How the World War arose*.⁶ It is distinctly a partizan attack on the old régime, and is, of course, much less trustworthy than the documents themselves.⁷

In Vienna Dr. Richard Gooss did for the Austrian Foreign Office what Kautsky had done for the German. He edited anonymously, without such detailed information as to dates, a three-volume *Red Book* containing 352 documents, dealing with the four

burg, 1919); referred to hereafter not by page but by document number, as "*Kautsky Docs.*" For Count Montgelas's own interesting account of the documents, see *Littell's Living Age*, January 24, 1919, pp. 218-220.

³ A. F. Pribram, *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, 1879-1914*, ed. A. C. Coolidge (Cambridge, 1920).

⁴ There may, however, very probably be documents which did not pass through the Foreign Office, which may yet be published. There are no documents from the General Staff except a few sent in to the Foreign Office. These would of course give needed light on the vexed question of mobilization.

⁵ Some are reproduced in *Littell's Living Age*, January 10, 1920, pp. 63-67.

⁶ K. Kautsky, *Wie der Weltkrieg entstand* (Berlin, 1919). As this pamphlet, costing only six marks, tended to injure the sale of the official documentary compilation, published a few days later and costing five times as much, he was sued on December 10 for breaking his agreement about priority of publication. Cf. *New York Times*, February 9, 1920.

⁷ It is subjected to severe criticism by Hans Delbrück, "Die Kautsky Papiere", in *Preussische Jahrbücher*, CLXXIX. 71-100 (January, 1920).

weeks prior to the outbreak of war.⁸ Like Kautsky, he also published prior to his official compilation a volume summing up his own conclusions and interpretations.⁹ It is a valuable book, more temperate than Kautsky's, and contains much information not given in the *Red Book*.

It is curious to see how zealously each of these two men, after studying one set of documents, assigns exclusively the whole blame for the war to his own former government. According to Kautsky, Germany eagerly pushed a hesitating Berchtold into the attack on Serbia and a world war. According to Gooss the unsuspecting Emperor William was the sacrificial lamb offered up on the altar of Berchtold's reckless perfidy and obstinacy.

In addition to the *Kautsky Documents* and the *Red Book*, the two great sources on which writers will largely base the future war of words as to the immediate responsibility for the World War, a flood of exculpatory memoirs and pamphlets followed the German collapse of 1918, similar to that which followed the French débâcle of 1870. Jagow¹⁰ rests his work mainly on his reply to Lichnowsky,¹¹ and on the already well-known material in the various colored books.¹² Pourtalès,¹³ the German ambassador at Petrograd, gives a very straightforward account of his share in the events at Petrograd and of his honest efforts to carry out the instructions of his government to keep Russia quiet and preserve the peace by localizing the conflict. His narrative is based on the contemporary notes which he made on his journey home in August, 1914,¹⁴ and on the embassy telegrams which he appears to have taken with him. Bethmann-Hollweg's *Observations*¹⁵ still insist that England was chiefly responsible for the war: England encouraged Russia with

⁸ *Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Vorgeschichte des Krieges, 1914: Ergänzungen und Nachträge zum Oest.-Ungar. Rotbuch* (Vienna, 1919, 3 vols.); quoted hereafter as *Red Book*.

⁹ *Das Wiener Kabinett und die Entstehung des Weltkrieges* (Vienna, 1919).

¹⁰ G. von Jagow, *Ursachen und Ausbruch des Weltkrieges* (Berlin, February, 1919).

¹¹ First printed in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 23, 1918, and translated with Lichnowsky's own Memorandum in *Disclosures from Germany* (American Association for International Conciliation, June, 1918), no. 127, pp. 352-357.

¹² *Collected Diplomatic Correspondence relating to the Outbreak of the European War* (London, 1915); quoted hereafter as *Dipl. Corresp.*

¹³ Graf Pourtalès, *Am Scheidewege zwischen Krieg und Frieden* (Berlin, February, 1919).

¹⁴ Published in *Kautsky Docs.*, app. V.

¹⁵ Bethmann-Hollweg, *Betrachtungen zum Weltkrieg* (Berlin, May, 1919).

the hope of support, and Russia was consequently encouraged to interfere in the Austro-Serbian crisis which Germany had intended to localize. Tirpitz,¹⁶ however, like Lichnowsky, takes Bethmann severely to task for having trusted too optimistically in thinking that Russia and France would not dare to call the bluff which Germany was allowing Austria to make. Helfferich¹⁷ agrees with Tirpitz that the German Foreign Office and the German people made their great mistake in taking the Serajevo crime so calmly and in thinking that war could be avoided as in 1909 and the later Balkan crises, if only Germany and Austria stood firm.

The Austrians, and with good reason, have made little effort to exculpate themselves. Berchtold, who more than any one else was responsible for the World War, has kept silent except for a very short and lame letter of excuse.¹⁸ Count Czernin's interesting volume deals mainly with diplomacy during the war, but in an introductory chapter he expresses the view, in which there may be truth, that the German ambassador at Vienna, Tschirschky, like so many German militarists, "was firmly persuaded that in the very near future Germany would have to go through a war against France and Russia, and he considered that the year 1914 would be more favorable than a later date. . . . That, however, was his policy, not Bethmann's." Tschirschky was one of those ambassadors who "did not keep to the instructions from their governments; they communicated messages correctly enough, but if their personal opinion differed, they made no secret of it, and it certainly weighed in the balance".¹⁹ Count Tisza, the Hungarian premier, by what we know of his character and attitude in July, 1914, might have been able to tell the truth fearlessly, but he lies in a bloody grave, assassinated, his lips sealed forever.²⁰

¹⁶ A. von Tirpitz, *Erinnerungen* (Leipzig, April, 1919). Lord Haldane, who had such good opportunities to judge Bethmann and Tirpitz from personal contact, gives an admirable review of their books in his own volume, *Before the War* (London, 1920), pp. 101-173. See also reviews of Tirpitz and Helfferich by Professor Gauss, pp. 496-500, above.

¹⁷ K. Helfferich, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges* (Berlin, March, 1919).

¹⁸ Letter to K. H. von Wiegand, in *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, October 10, 1919; reprinted as an appendix in Goričar, *The Inside Story of Austro-German Intrigue* (New York, 1920), pp. 299-301.

¹⁹ Count Czernin, *In the World War* (New York, 1919), pp. 9-11.

²⁰ See "Some New Sources of European History", by "Tramontana" in *The New Europe*, nos. 162, 163, 167 (November 20, 27, December 25, 1919). See also C. Oman, *The Outbreak of the War of 1914-1918* (London, 1919); M. Ritter, "Deutschland und der Ausbruch des Weltkrieges", in *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXXI. 23-92 (1919); K. F. Nowak, *Der Weg zur Katastrophe* (Berlin,

During the quarter of a century following Bismarck's dismissal in 1890, the Triple Alliance had lost much of that dominating position in Europe which he had left as his heritage to the irresponsible, ambitious, erratic young master who succeeded him. Emperor William by a series of often well-intentioned, but usually ill-judged moves, had essentially weakened, instead of strengthened, Germany's diplomatic position. He had lowered her prestige and had alarmed his neighbors who consequently drew closer together. The Triple Entente, in spite of its exterior position, divergent interests, and different forms of government as represented by republican France and autocratic Russia, represented in man-power and sea-power a far stronger combination than that of the Triple Alliance supported by Rumania. Moreover, the Triple Alliance was beginning to develop dangerous disruptive tendencies within itself. Italy held close to her old friendship with England, and since 1902 had begun to coquette with France. She had not hesitated to embarrass the Triple Alliance by her attack on Germany's friends in 1911, and she had developed inconvenient ambitions in the Balkans, antagonistic to Austria's interests, ambitions which found expression at the renewal of the Triple Alliance in 1912, and in her alleged refusal to back Austria in action against Serbia in August, 1913. Above all, Italy's nationalistic aspirations and traditions made her people still hate her Austrian ally, and covet the *terra irredenta* still under Austrian domination.²¹ Similarly, Tisza's nationalistic Magyar policy toward the Rumanians in Hungary had created such a strong anti-Austrian feeling in Rumania that King Carol admitted his doubt whether in the event of an Austro-Russian war he could stand against public feeling and fulfill his obligations to the Triple Alliance. He even seemed to be shifting to the side of Russia, judging at any rate by the tsar's visit to Bucharest in the spring of 1914 to attend a marriage uniting the royal houses of Russia and Rumania.

But the most ominous danger for the Triple Alliance lay in the situation in Austria. The disruptive tendency of the increasingly powerful nationalistic aspirations of the subject nationalities had long led political Cassandras to prophesy the dissolution of the Dual

1919); Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (New York, 1918); R. Hoeniger, *Russlands Vorbereitung zum Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 1919); Lord Loreburn, *How the War came* (London, 1918); and Goričar, *The Inside Story of Austro-German Intrigue* (New York, 1920).

²¹ The strength of this popular feeling and San Giuliano's consequent pessimism on the subject of the Triple Alliance, even before Austria's ultimatum to Serbia, are strikingly revealed in the numerous despatches of Flotow, the German ambassador at Rome. *Kautsky Docs.*, nos. 59, 60, 64, 73, 75, 78, 109, 119.

Monarchy upon the death of its venerable ruler. Though Emperor William had stood beside his ally "in shining armor" at the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Great-Serbian movement had grown menacingly stronger. In spite of Serbia's official promises to Austria in 1909, Austria still feared that a Greater Serbia might one day wrench away from Austria not only Bosnia but also her other Jugo-Slav districts. This fear had been increased by the unexpected events of the Balkan wars, which had so greatly weakened Turkey and extended Serbia directly athwart the projected Austrian avenue to Salonica. Austria suspected in the spring of 1914 that Russia and France were secretly urging on the Pan-Serbian movement and encouraging the formation of a new Balkan alliance of which Serbia was to be the head and of which the purpose was the uniting of all Jugo-Slavs under Serbian rule.²²

While the Triple Alliance was weakened by rifts within, its leaders began to suffer from the "encirclement" nightmare. They saw that the members of the Triple Entente were drawing more closely to one another and strengthening themselves internally. In June, 1912, the Franco-Russian alliance was strengthened by a naval convention between the two countries.²³ In November this was supplemented by a naval understanding between England and France,²⁴ which enabled England to concentrate her naval forces in the English Channel, while the French navy could look after England's interests in the Mediterranean. On April 2, 1914, Sazonov wrote to Izvolski, the Russian minister at Paris, that the Triple Entente ought to be strengthened and extended into a regular Triple Alliance. Accordingly when King George, accompanied by Sir Edward Grey, visited Paris in the following month, the French naval minister on behalf of Russia suggested the adoption of a similar naval arrangement between Russia and England.

Grey was unwilling to enter into any formal binding alliance with Russia, but consented to carry on further naval discussions, and a Russian naval officer was sent, in strictest secrecy, to London from Petrograd. At a conference of Russian officials on May 26, at which the chief of the Russian naval staff presided, Russia had de-

²² *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 14; *Red Book*, vol. I., nos. 2, 8; Gooss, p. 4; Bethmann-Hollweg, pp. 115-122; Jagow, pp. 75-81; Ritter, p. 49; Boghitschewitsch, *Kriegsursachen*, p. 7.

²³ *Deutschland Schuldig?*, p. 168; *Russian Documents* (Amer. Assoc. for Int. Concil., March, 1919), no. 136, p. 532.

²⁴ Published in *Dipl. Corresp.*, pp. 79-82, but discovered in some way by the Germans apparently as early as March, 1913. Cf. *Nordd. Allg. Zeitung*, October 16, 1914; *New York Times*, November 8, 1914, p. 6.

cided to ask England to agree to a naval convention, which should provide for a co-operative action between the Russian and English fleets, such as had already been adopted between France and England.

An agreement must be reached concerning signals and special ciphers, radio-telegrams, and the mode of communication between the Russian and English naval staffs. Besides this the two naval staffs are to inform each other regularly about the fleets of third powers and about their own navies, in particular about technical data and newly introduced machines and inventions. . . . The Russian naval agreement with England, like the Franco-Russian agreement, is to make provision for actions of the Russian and English navies, which, previously agreed upon, are to be fought separately.²⁵

The negotiations gave rise to so many rumors and suspicions that Grey was interpellated on the subject in the House of Commons in June. In reply he repeated Asquith's statement of the year before, which still held good, that

there were no unpublished agreements with European powers apt to restrain or hem in the free decision of the Government or Parliament as to whether England was to participate in a war or not. No negotiations with any power had since been concluded which would detract from the truth of the declaration in question. No such negotiations were in progress, nor was it likely, as far as he could judge, that such would be entered upon.

But Grey's denial, though within the letter of the truth, did not satisfy either English newspapers like the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily News*, nor, much less, the *Berlin Tageblatt* and the German Foreign Office. The latter finally became so uneasy that, on July 15, Jagow suddenly called on Herr Ballin to leave his bath resort and go to England to see what he could find out:

Lichnowsky called Grey's attention to the *Tageblatt* [article on an Anglo-Russian naval agreement] and Grey, after some hesitation, did not deny the matter altogether. Now there may in fact be more behind this than even Theodore Wolff himself may know, or than the good Lichnowsky may believe. There are actually negotiations taking place between London and Petersburg for a naval agreement in which—this in the greatest secrecy—Russia is striving for a wide-reaching military and naval co-operation. These negotiations have not yet come to a result in spite of Russian pressure, partly perhaps because Grey has become somewhat hesitant on account of the *Tageblatt's* indiscretion and on account of the open opposition in a part of the Liberal Party in England. But the Russians appear to be pressing hard, and who knows what they may offer as an equivalent in return? In the end Grey will certainly not oppose its conclusion, unless he meets with opposition within his own party or in the Cabinet. . . . The importance which the matter has

²⁵ Nordd. Allg. Zeitung, October 16, 1914. Cf. Jagow, *Ursachen*, pp. 85-91; also *New York Times*, November 8, 1914, p. 6.

for us, I need not go into further. We could scarcely consider any longer any farther drawing closer to England. It seems to me, therefore, very important to make once more an effort to wreck the affair. . . . My idea was whether you, through your numerous relations with influential Englishmen—have you not such relations with Lord Haldane?—could not sound a warning beyond the Channel.²⁶

Similarly, Pourtalès, at the close of Poincaré's visit in Petrograd, tried to sound Sazonov on the subject. But Sazonov replied with indignation that "such a naval convention exists only in the imagination of the *Berliner Tageblatt* and in the moon".²⁷ Emperor William, however, was by no means convinced of Sazonov's sincerity, for he pencilled on Pourtalès's despatch, "according to the declaration of the Russian naval attaché, it is just coming into being! To-day, indeed! Or to-morrow!"

While the members of the Triple Entente were thus drawing more closely together, and were suspected by Germany of being more close than they really were, it was well known that Russia and France were both strengthening their military forces in the spring of 1914. Since 1912 Russia had been reorganizing and greatly increasing her army, and had borrowed millions from France with which to build strategic railways directed against the Central Powers.²⁸ France was changing from the two-year to the three-year term of military service. Germany's own great military increase of 1913 was thus more than offset by that of her neighbors. An article in the Petrograd *Bourse Gazette*, urging upon France the three-year term of service, calculated that

according to the Czar's ukase this year's contingent of recruits is *raised* from 450,000 to 580,000 men, and the *period of service increased by six months*. Thanks to this measure there stand every *winter* in Russia *four* contingents of recruits under arms, *i.e.*, an army of 2,300,000 men. . . . Germany has 880,000 [Kaiser's note: "Praise God"], Austria 500,000, and Italy 400,000. Quite naturally therefore Russia *expects* 770,000 from France, which is only *possible with the three-year term of service*. [Kaiser's note: "So there! at last the Russians have laid their cards on the table! Whoever in Germany still doubts that the Russo-Gauls are working at high pressure for an early war with us, and that we ought

²⁶ *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 56. Ballin accordingly dined with Haldane and Grey on July 23, and received the correct but elusive reply that England as a member of the Entente had to discuss questions which Russia and France brought to her, just as Germany doubtless had to discuss matters within the Triple Alliance, but that no naval convention with Russia existed nor did England intend to consent to one. *Ibid.*, no. 254.

²⁷ Pourtalès to Bethmann, July 24. *Ibid.*, no. 203.

²⁸ For details of Russia's secret military preparations, based on documents captured by Germany in Russia during the war, see Hoeniger, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

to take corresponding counter-measures, deserves to be sent straight to the madhouse at Dalldorf."]²⁹

Such was the situation in the early summer of 1914. Germany and the Triple Alliance had lost prestige and were growing relatively weaker in comparison with the Triple Entente, and Austria faced the danger of dissolution unless she rehabilitated herself. This situation was not the result of any purposeful English policy of encirclement, nor of any aggressive intentions on the part of either England or France, whatever most Germans might think to the contrary. It was the result of the unfortunate way in which the Kaiser and his mediocre favorites had mismanaged Bismarck's inheritance during near a quarter of a century. Germany and Austria, however, felt that it was becoming increasingly imperative to do something to remedy the situation, and prevent themselves from losing ground still further. There were various ways by which they might hope to extricate themselves from this unenviable situation.

Bethmann-Hollweg's way, and that of Jagow, his associate at the Foreign Office, had been to make a friendly settlement with England of the irritating points at issue between the two countries in Africa and Mesopotamia. Similar settlements by England with France in 1904 and with Russia in 1907 had worked admirably. Though Germany, in view of the commercial and naval rivalry between Germans and Englishmen, might not be able to develop such a settlement into a close entente, such as England had established with France and Russia, nevertheless it would go far toward establishing better relations between the two great naval powers, and lessen Germany's sense of danger. Accordingly, the draft of a treaty in regard to the Portuguese colonies and the Bagdad Railway was drawn up. Grey was ready to meet Lichnowsky more than half-way. But the signature to the treaty was held up at the last minute, probably through the influence of the militarists at Berlin, and perhaps as a result of Berlin's suspicions in regard to the Anglo-Russian naval convention, mentioned above.³⁰

Berchtold's way, on the other hand, was at first an alliance with Bulgaria. Soon after the assassination, however, he abandoned this in favor of the plan for crushing Serbia. His first idea was developed from a memorandum drawn up by one of his subordinates in

²⁹ *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 2. The article was reprinted on June 14 in the Berlin *Lokal Anzeiger*, and the italics indicate the passages which the Kaiser underlined. Cf. Pourtalès's despatch, June 13, in *Deutschland Schuldig?*, pp. 186-188.

³⁰ Lichnowsky, pp. 279-295; Jagow, *Ursachen*, pp. 57-63; Bethmann-Hollweg, *Betrachtungen*, pp. 61-63; Haldane, pp. 93 ff., 143 ff.

the Austrian Foreign Office, Baron Flotow, to the following effect.³¹ Since Austria could no longer count on King Carol's being able to fulfill Rumania's treaty obligations to Austria, Austria must compel Rumania to declare herself openly either for or against Austria. The best way to put pressure on Rumania for this purpose was for Austria to enter into an alliance with Bulgaria, and to make Sofia, instead of Bucharest, the pivot of Austrian Balkan policy. Bulgaria would guarantee to Rumania the existing boundary between Bulgaria and Rumania, so that King Carol would not be antagonized or alarmed. In fact he would then see the wisdom of holding to the Triple Alliance, and could even be induced to use his great influence with Serbia "to draw Serbia closer to the Dual Monarchy; in which case the Dual Monarchy, within the bounds of such a political situation, would meet Serbia most loyally half-way".³² But if King Carol should not consent to make a satisfactory public declaration of his loyalty to the Triple Alliance, then Austria must revise her military arrangements and seek to bring Turkey into alliance with Bulgaria, so that both would support the Triple Alliance.

Flotow's memorandum, somewhat amplified by Matscheko and Pogatscher, was put before Berchtold in the middle of June. He decided that it should be worked out in greater detail and laid before the Berlin authorities as a memorandum for the guidance of the Central Powers in Balkan affairs. Accordingly, an elaborate draft to this effect was completed on June 24. It retained the idea of an Austrian *rapprochement* with Serbia, by means of Rumania's good graces.³³ But during the next few days Berchtold went over the draft and altered it with his own hand considerably. He omitted altogether the idea of a *rapprochement* with Serbia, as he doubted whether he could count upon Rumania. Instead he emphasized in more detail his idea of closer relations with Bulgaria and the formation of a new Balkan league under Austrian influence.

In this form the memorandum was complete and ready for transmission to Berlin, when on Sunday June 28 came the news that Franz Ferdinand had been murdered at Serajevo. The memorandum was not changed, except to add a few sentences to the effect that the frightful deed gave indubitable proof of the irreconcilability

³¹ Gooss, pp. 3-6.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³³ "Sollte Rumänien ferner mit Rücksicht auf seine freundschaftlichen Verhältnisse zu Serbien darauf Gewicht legen, so konnte die Monarchie in Bukarest auch die Versicherung abgeben, dass sie eine von Rumänien in Belgrad unternommene Aktion, welche auf eine Aenderung der Haltung Serbiens gegenüber der Monarchie abzielen würde, ihrerseits durch Entgegenkommen auf politischem und wirtschaftlichem Gebiete Serbien gegenüber zu fördern bereit sei." *Ibid.*, p. 18.

of the conflict between Austria and Serbia. Austria's good-will and concessions toward Serbia in the past were useless; henceforth Austria would have to reckon with the persistent, irreconcilable, and aggressive hostility of Serbia.³⁴ Berchtold also drew up a personal letter from Francis Joseph to Emperor William:

I am sending you a memorandum drawn up by my Minister of Foreign Affairs, prior to the frightful catastrophe at Serajevo, which after that tragic event now appears especially noteworthy. The attack on my poor nephew is a direct result of the agitation of the Russian and Serbian Pan-Slavs whose single aim is the weakening of the Triple Alliance and the disruption of my Empire. Serajevo is not the deed of a single individual, but the result of a well-arranged plot whose threads reach to Belgrade; and though presumably it will be impossible to prove the complicity of the Serbian government, there can be no doubt that its policy of uniting all the South Slavs under the Serbian flag promotes such crimes and that a continuation of this situation spells lasting danger for my dynasty and for my territories.

This danger is heightened by the fact that Rumania, in spite of its existing alliance with us, is in close friendship with Serbia and permits in its own territory just as hateful an agitation against us as does Serbia. . . . I fear that Rumania can only be saved for the Triple Alliance in case we do two things: prevent the establishment of a new Balkan League under Russian protection by joining Bulgaria to the Triple Alliance; and give it clearly to be understood in Bucharest that Serbia's friends cannot be our friends, and that Rumania can no longer count upon us as allies, unless she cuts loose from Serbia and suppresses with all her power her own agitation in Rumania which is directed against the existence of my Empire. The aim of my government must henceforth be to isolate and diminish Serbia. The first step in this direction must be to strengthen Bulgaria and secure an alliance with her. Bulgaria can then unite with Rumania and guarantee her territorial integrity; and Rumania will then perhaps retreat from the dangerous path into which she is led by her friendship with Serbia and her rapprochement with Russia. If this should succeed, a further attempt could be made to reconcile Greece with Bulgaria and Turkey, and so form a new Balkan League under the protection of the Triple Alliance; its purpose would be to set a dam to the Pan-Slav flood and assure peace to our lands. This will only be possible when Serbia, which at present forms the pivot of the Pan-Slav policy, *is ejected from the Balkans as a political factor*. After the last frightful events in Bosnia, you too will be convinced that *a friendly settlement of the opposition which divides Austria from Serbia is no longer to be thought of*, and that the peace policy of all European monarchs is threatened so long as the source of criminal agitation in Belgrade lives on unpunished.³⁵

The royal letter and Berchtold's accompanying memorandum

³⁴ *Red Book*, I. 4-16; *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 14; Gooss, p. 24.

³⁵ Condensed from *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 13; *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 1. The italics are mine; they indicate words which Tisza objected to as being too strong and likely to make Berlin "shy off" from the action proposed. Cf. Gooss, p. 29. For other indications of Tisza's disapproval of strong action against Serbia, see *Red Book*, vol. I., nos. 2, 8, 9, 10, 12.

were despatched to Berlin by special messenger (Hoyos) for presentation to the Kaiser by the Austrian ambassador, Szögyény. As a luxuriant legend has grown up about a "crown council" at Potsdam, Szögyény shall tell in his own words exactly what happened:³⁶

After I had brought it to the knowledge of Emperor William that I had a letter to deliver, I received Their Majesties' invitation to lunch today at noon in the New Palace. I gave His Majesty the letter and the accompanying memorandum. He read both documents in my presence with the greatest attention. At first he assured me that he had expected an earnest action on our part against Serbia, but that in view of the statements of Francis Joseph, he must keep in view a serious European complication and therefore wished to give no definite answer until he had consulted with the Chancellor.

After luncheon when I again emphasized the seriousness of the situation, His Majesty authorized me to report that in this case also we could reckon on Germany's full support. He thought action ought not to be delayed. Russia's attitude would doubtless be hostile, but he had been prepared for that for years; and if it should even come to a war between Austria and Russia, we could be convinced that Germany would stand by our side with her accustomed faithfulness as an ally. Russia, furthermore, he thought, was in no way ready for war and would certainly ponder very seriously before appealing to arms.

His Majesty said he understood how hard Francis Joseph, with his well-known love of peace, would find it to invade Serbia; but if we had really decided that military action against Serbia was necessary, he would be sorry if we left unused the present moment which was so favorable for us. Early tomorrow morning Emperor William intends to go to Kiel to start from there on his northern cruise. But first he will talk with the Chancellor, and for this purpose he has summoned him for this evening to the New Palace.

On the next day, after Bethmann, accompanied by Zimmermann, had discussed the matter with Emperor William, the chancellor officially defined Germany's attitude to Szögyény as follows: "Austria must judge what is to be done to clear up her relation to Serbia; whatever Austria's decision may turn out to be, Austria can count with certainty upon it, that Germany will stand behind her as an ally and friend."³⁷

³⁶ Szögyény to Berchtold, July 5, 7:35 P.M. (condensed); *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 6.

³⁷ *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 7; Gooss, p. 34, note 1, tries to show that Szögyény, being old and not always able to grasp things correctly, over-emphasized the war pressure from Berlin. But his accuracy in these two despatches is fully confirmed by Bethmann's account to Tschirschky: "Concerning Serbia His Majesty naturally cannot take any stand in the questions opened between Austria and Serbia, for they are beyond his competence. But Francis Joseph may be sure that His Majesty in accord with his treaty obligations and old friendship will stand true by Austria's side under all circumstances." The last three words in the original draft made by Zimmermann were stricken out by the more cautious Bethmann and not sent to Tschirschky. *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 15.

Thus the Kaiser and Bethmann chose their policy. They gave Austria a free hand and made the mistake of putting the situation outside of their control into the hands of a man as reckless and as unscrupulous as Berchtold. They committed themselves to a leap in the dark. They soon found themselves involved, as we shall see, in actions which they did not approve, and by decisions which were taken against their advice; but they could not seriously object or threaten, because they had pledged their support to Austria in advance, and any hesitation on their part would only weaken the Triple Alliance at a critical moment when it most needed to be strong. Bethmann and the Kaiser on July 5 were not criminals plotting the World War; they were simpletons putting "a noose about their necks"³⁸ and handing the other end of the rope to a stupid and clumsy adventurer who now felt free to go as far as he liked.

But a difference in attitude between the Kaiser and his chancellor is already visible on July 5, and was to grow as the crisis increased, though Bethmann always ended by yielding his own views to his master's, out of a mistaken sense of loyalty and honor. The Kaiser with his shrewder insight and longer acquaintance with the Austrian situation, at once grasped the fact that action against Serbia was the main thing to be considered on July 5. He devoted his main attention to that and only touched briefly on Berchtold's plan for diplomatic action in the Balkans. Bethmann's reaction was just the reverse; he thought the diplomatic action at Bucharest and Sofia to be the main thing. To it he devoted four-fifths of his despatch of July 6 to Tschirschky. Only in a sentence at the end does he say anything concerning Serbia.³⁹

The Kaiser was deeply shocked emotionally at the murder of the archduke, with whom he had been visiting at Konopischt only a few weeks before. In his annotations he never ceases to exclaim against the Serbians as "murderers". For fear of attacks against his own life, he abandoned his projected visit to Francis Joseph.⁴⁰ He felt that the monarchical principle was in danger, and that all monarchs, Nicholas II. most of all, ought to agree with him that the crime at Serajevo should meet with the severest condemnation.^{40a} He wanted

³⁸ As the Kaiser himself frantically wrote on July 30 after learning of Grey's warning, Russian mobilization, and Berchtold's persistent rejection of all proposed peaceful solutions: In addition to encirclement by the Entente, "wird uns die Dummheit und Ungeschicklichkeit unseres Verbündeten zum Fallstrick gemacht". *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 401.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, no 15; cf. note 37 above.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 6.

^{40a} *Ibid.*, nos. 29, 120, 288, 290, 335.

retribution to come as quickly as possible while Europe was still under the vivid impression of the assassination and sympathized with Austria. He expected military action by Austria against Serbia, but on July 5 he did not think it probable that the Austro-Serbian dispute would lead to a European war; he could safely start next morning as had long been planned, and as Bethmann advised, on his northern cruise. This he would hardly have done, if he had expected that the early action, which he hoped Austria would take at once instead of delaying more than two weeks, would certainly involve serious European complications.⁴¹ Nevertheless, he realized that while it was not probable that Austria would kindle a European war, it was possible. Therefore, early on July 6, before leaving Potsdam at quarter past nine for Kiel, he had brief separate interviews with subordinate representatives of the army and navy. He informed each of his interview with Szögyény. He told them privately to inform their chiefs, who were absent on furlough from Berlin, but added that they need not cut short their furloughs to return to Berlin, and that no orders for military preparations need be given, as he did not expect any serious warlike complications.⁴²

Such were the events which grew into the legend of a "crown council" at Potsdam on July 5, so naïvely reported by Mr. Morgenthau from the lips of Wangenheim, the German ambassador at Constantinople:

The Kaiser, he told me, had summoned him to Berlin for an imperial conference. This meeting took place at Potsdam on July 5. The Kaiser presided and nearly all the important ambassadors attended; also Tirpitz, Moltke, the great bankers, railroad directors, and the captains of German industry, all of whom were as necessary to German war preparation as the army itself.⁴³ The Kaiser solemnly put the question to each man in turn, "Are you ready for war?" All replied, "Yes," except the financiers; they said they must have two weeks to sell their foreign securities and to make loans. At that time few people had looked upon the Serajevo tragedy as something that would inevitably lead to war. This conference, Wangenheim told me, took all precautions that no such suspicion should be aroused. It decided to give the bankers time to readjust their finances for the coming war, and then the

⁴¹ The idea of withdrawal from the scene in order to lull Europe before a sudden attack, he characterized as "childish" in the case of the Austrian chief-of-staff. *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 29. The moment he heard the kind of ultimatum that Austria had presented to Serbia he started in a hurry to return to Berlin.

⁴² Statements of Capelle, Bertrab, and Zenker, in October, 1919, in *Kautsky Docs.*, pp. xiii-xvi. It is quite possible, as Tirpitz states (*Erinnerungen*, p. 209), that the Kaiser had also consulted Falkenhayn, the minister of war, on July 5.

⁴³ According to other forms of the legend, an Austrian archduke and the Austrian chief-of-staff also attended.

several members went quietly back to their work, or started on their vacations. Wangenheim of course admitted that Germany precipitated the war. I think he was rather proud of the whole performance, proud that Germany had gone about the matter in so methodical and far-seeing a way, and especially proud that he himself had been invited to participate in so epoch-making a gathering.⁴⁴

What are the facts as revealed by the documents? The reason for the two weeks' delay was not Germany's need to sell securities. It was due, as we shall see, to Tisza's opposition and then to Berchtold's wish to avoid sending the ultimatum until Poincaré had left Russia. Most of the persons alleged to have been present were elsewhere. As for ambassadors, Tschirschky was certainly at Vienna;⁴⁵ Lichnowsky was not present, or he would not have said in his memoir that he learned of the conference "subsequently".⁴⁶ There is not the slightest indication that Pourtalès and Schoen came from Petrograd and Paris. Moltke was away at Karlsbad, and Tirpitz at Tarasp.⁴⁷ Jagow, secretary of state, did not return from his honeymoon in Switzerland until July 6.⁴⁸ It is scarcely conceivable that an Austrian archduke and chief-of-staff could come from Vienna to Potsdam without the fact becoming known. Helfferich, director of the German Bank, Bethmann, and Jagow all vigorously deny that any such council took place.⁴⁹ We must therefore reject the whole story of a crown council on July 5 as a legend. It may have quite probably originated, as Helfferich suggests, with a waiter in a Berlin café who thought he overheard something of the kind from guests whom he was serving. Lichnowsky, Mühlön, and the Socialist deputies in the Reichstag, merely repeated hearsay. Wangenheim, if we are to believe that Mr. Morgenthau has correctly reported him,

⁴⁴ Morgenthau, p. 88 (summarized).

⁴⁵ Otherwise Bethmann would not have telegraphed to him as he did on July 6. *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 15.

⁴⁶ Lichnowsky, p. 323.

⁴⁷ In Switzerland. *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 74; Tirpitz, *Erinnerungen*, pp. 208 ff., 227

⁴⁸ Jagow, *Ursachen*, p. 97. The first document from his hand is of July 8. *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 18, note 2.

⁴⁹ Bethmann, *Betrachtungen*, p. 136; Jagow, *Ursachen*, p. 102. Helfferich, *Vorgeschichte*, pp. 178-182, states that from his close touch with the Foreign Office he knew of Berchtold's memorandum and consequently began to take financial precautions. He also says he investigated the rumor that Austrian military officials saw the Kaiser on July 5, and found that the rumor was without foundation. Neither Sir Horace Rumbold, who was in charge of the British embassy in Berlin during the early days of July, nor any of his diplomatic colleagues, though they placed no confidence in German statements, had any inkling of a conference; Sir Horace was inclined to believe that the newspapers had found a mare's nest. Oman, p. 16 ff.

must have been so puffed up with pride at the German victories and at his own personal success in bringing Turkey into alliance with the Central Powers, that he delighted boastfully to magnify to a credulous auditor the share which he himself had in Germany's destiny.

However, though no such general conference took place on July 5 at which a European war was plotted, the date is momentous, for it does mark the moment at which Berlin gave Berchtold a free hand against Serbia. Until July 5 Berchtold had not dared to take energetic action against Serbia; partly because he knew that his colleague Tisza, the Hungarian premier, was strongly opposed to a sudden and unprovoked attack on Serbia;⁵⁰ and partly because he did not feel sure of German support. Germany had hitherto been taking a reserved and moderating attitude in regard to Austrian adventures in the Balkans.⁵¹ Even before the Serajevo crime Berchtold had tried in vain "to open Tschirschky's eyes to the danger that Austria was in".⁵² Two days after Serajevo, when even serious people in Vienna "were expressing frequently the hope that Austria had now the excuse for coming to a final reckoning with the Serbs", Tschirschky still

used every opportunity to warn calmly but very energetically and earnestly against any over hasty steps. He pointed out above all else that Austria must be clear as to exactly what she wanted, and remember that she did not stand alone in the world, that she must consider her allies and the European situation, and especially the attitude which Italy and Rumania would take in regard to Serbia.⁵³

Up to July 5, Tschirschky accurately represented the moderating views of the Berlin Foreign Office, for on July 4 Szögyény tele-

⁵⁰ Cf. Tisza's letter to Francis Joseph, July 1. *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 1.

⁵¹ Bethmann, *Betrachtungen*, p. 137 ff. Cf. also Jagow's illuminating private letter to Lichnowsky, July 18. *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 72.

⁵² Hoyos at Vienna to Pallavicini at Constantinople, June 26: "Unterdessen wird ein langes Memorandum für Berlin ausgearbeitet, das demnächst abgehen soll, und der Minister (Graf Berchtold) tut sein Mögliches, Tschirschky die Augen zu öffnen. . . ."

⁵³ Tschirschky to Bethmann, June 30, *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 7. Highly significant of Emperor William's eagerness to have Austria act quickly and vigorously against Serbia are his marginal comments on this despatch. He underlined both the passages placed in quotations above; beside the first he wrote "Now or never", and beside the second, in condemnation of Tschirschky's restraining attitude of moderation: "Who authorized him to this? That is very stupid! It's none of his business, for it is purely Austria's affair to consider what to do in this matter, for it will be said afterwards, if things go wrong, that Germany was not willing!! Tschirschky will please drop this nonsense! Matters must be cleared up with the Serbs, and that soon. That's all self-evident and as clear as daylight."

graphed to Berchtold, "Zimmermann recommends the greatest precaution and advises that no humiliating demands be made upon Serbia."⁵⁴ But after July 5 his attitude changed.⁵⁵ Henceforth Tschirschky appears to have urged Berchtold to the speedy and energetic action against Serbia desired by Emperor William.⁵⁶ This was in accord with the tenor of telegrams from Szögyény, who reflected prevailing German militarist opinion as well as the views of the Berlin Foreign Office.⁵⁷

Accordingly, on Tuesday morning, July 7, Berchtold, now confident of German support, called a ministerial council at Vienna at which the leading ministers and the chiefs of the army and navy were present. He raised

the question whether the time had not come to make Serbia harmless once for all through the use of force. Such a decisive blow could not be struck without diplomatic preparations. So he had got in touch with the German government. The discussions in Berlin had led to a very satisfactory result. Emperor William, as well as Bethmann-Hollweg, had given emphatic assurance of unconditional support in case of a war-like complication with Serbia. Italy and Rumania must still be reckoned with. And here he was in accord with the Berlin Cabinet that it was better to act first without consulting them, and then await any possible demands for compensation.⁵⁸ It was possible that a passage of arms with Serbia might result in a war with Russia. But Russia was at present following a policy that, looking to the future, was aiming at a combination of the Balkan states, including Rumania, for the purpose of using them against the Monarchy when the time seemed opportune. He was of the opinion that Austria must take into account the fact that her situation in the face of such a policy was bound to become increasingly worse, especially as passive toleration would be interpreted by her South Slavs and Rumanians as a sign of weakness, and would lend force to the drawing power of the two border states.

⁵⁴ *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 5.

⁵⁵ He may have received, as Lichnowsky asserts, a reprimand from the Kaiser for his moderating attitude. No such reprimand, however, appears in any of the documents, but this may be easily explained by the fact that the Kautsky documents only pretend to reproduce the messages which passed through the Berlin Foreign Office, together with a few others, such as the letters between the crowned heads, and Tschirschky may have received his reprimand direct from the Kaiser. There are indications that Tschirschky was in direct communication with the Kaiser during July, 1914. He was one of the Kaiser's personal favorites and had often accompanied him on the northern cruises.

⁵⁶ *Red Book*, vol. I., nos. 10, 44; *Kautsky Docs.*, nos. 35, 40, 41, 49, 94.

⁵⁷ *Red Book*, vol. I., nos. 6, 7, 13, 15, 23, 41.

⁵⁸ If this was really Bethmann's view at first (*cf. Red Book*, vol. I., no. 7), the chancellor soon changed his mind. For on July 15 (*Kautsky Docs.*, no. 46) Jagow tried to persuade Berchtold to come to a timely understanding beforehand with Italy by offering such "a fat morsel" as the Trentino. This was the first of a whole series of telegrams which advised Vienna to satisfy Italy and safeguard the integrity of the Triple Alliance—advice which Berchtold obstinately disregarded until it was too late.

All agreed with Berchtold except Tisza. He was unwilling to countenance the surprise attack on Serbia without preliminary diplomatic action, which Berchtold contemplated and which Hoyos had unfortunately talked of at Berlin; it would make a bad impression on European public opinion, and involve the probable hostility of all the Balkan states except Bulgaria, which was so weak that it could afford little assistance. He favored formulating demands on Serbia and only presenting an ultimatum in case Serbia did not yield to them. These demands must be hard, but not impossible of fulfillment. If Serbia accepted them, it would be a striking diplomatic success and increase Austrian prestige in the Balkans. If the demands were refused, he also would favor military action, but was emphatic that such action should aim at the diminution, but not at the complete destruction, of Serbia, because on the one hand, Russia would never allow the latter without a life-and-death struggle, and on the other, because he, as premier of Hungary, would never be able to agree to the annexation of a part of Serbia by the Dual Monarchy. He did not believe it was necessary to make war at once, but rather hoped that the diplomatic situation in the Balkans would improve. After a long discussion in which the other ministers expressed their views at length, and possible military measures had been discussed, Tisza's opinion so far prevailed that it was agreed that mobilization should not take place until concrete demands had been presented to Serbia and rejected.

All except Tisza, however, also agreed that a purely diplomatic victory, even if it ended with a striking humiliation of Serbia, would be worthless, and that consequently such far-reaching demands must be presented to Serbia as to make their rejection foreseen, so that the way to a radical solution through a military attack would be prepared.⁵⁹

As result of this council, Berchtold decided to give up for the present his first idea of negotiations for alliance with Bulgaria, and to concentrate his attention on direct action against Serbia.⁶⁰ The next day he tried to influence Tisza to adopt the views of the other ministers, by writing him that Tschirschky "has just had a telegram from Berlin in which his imperial master had directed him to declare here most emphatically that Berlin expects Austria to act against Serbia, and that it would not be understood in Germany if we let

⁵⁹ Minutes of the ministerial council, July 7, in *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 8; also translated in *N. Y. Times Current History*, December, 1919, pp. 455-460; cf. also Tschirschky's report in *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 19.

⁶⁰ *Kautsky Docs.*, nos. 19, 21, 22.

this given opportunity go by without striking a blow".⁶¹ But Tisza had already set forth his more moderate views more fully in a memoir to Francis Joseph,⁶² in which he suggested a number of demands which might properly be made upon Serbia, insisting at the same time that Austria should disavow any intentions to annex territory, and finally that if Serbia yielded to the demands, Austria must accept this solution *bona fide*. On Thursday, July 9, Berchtold had an audience with Francis Joseph at Ischl and reported the views of the majority of the council and of Tisza.⁶³

During the first two weeks after the murder of Franz Ferdinand, all action proposed against Serbia, both in Berlin and in Vienna, was based on the supposition expressed in Francis Joseph's letter to the Kaiser "that the crime was the result of a well-organized plot the threads of which reach to Belgrade". To get the proof of this, if possible, Wiesner had been sent by Berchtold to Serajevo to investigate on the spot. He reported on July 13: "There is nothing to prove or even to cause suspicion of Serbian government's cognizance of steps leading to crime or of its preparing it or of its supplying the weapons. On the contrary, there are indications that this is to be regarded as out of the question."⁶⁴ Thus, on July 13, Berchtold knew there were no grounds for charging the Serbian government with complicity, and that the supposition on which he had been proceeding was false. Therefore, he deliberately suppressed all knowledge of the Wiesner report, both from Tisza and from his own emperor, and from the German government. He proceeded instead to the formulation of demands which were to be so framed that Serbia could not possibly accept them. This also explains why Austria did not give the powers any opportunity to examine the *dossier* of charges cobbled together against Serbia in Vienna, until after Europe had been faced with the *fait accompli* of war between Austria and Serbia. It was this refusal to present the evidence against Serbia seasonably which, with justice, greatly embittered and roused the Russian foreign minister Sazonov.⁶⁵ It explains why Berchtold, as we

⁶¹ July 8, *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 10. The Kautsky documents do not contain any such telegram. Perhaps it was another of the telegrams sent direct from the Kaiser to Tschirschky and not from the Berlin Foreign Office. The objection might be raised that Berchtold speaks of a telegram "from Berlin", whereas the Kaiser was not at Berlin, but on his northern trip. However, "from Berlin" here may mean no more than "from the German authorities", or "via Berlin".

⁶² *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 12.

⁶³ *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 29.

⁶⁴ *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 17; Goričar, p. 296.

⁶⁵ *Red Book*, vol. I., nos. 16-19; vol. III., no. 16; *Kautsky Docs.*, nos. 120,

shall see, was determined to prevent any interference or investigation by the powers looking toward a peaceful settlement of the dispute. He knew that his charges would not bear the light. It explains why all Sir Edward Grey's proposals were deceitfully blocked at Vienna until "overtaken by events" and so rendered useless.

Concealing the Wiesner report, Berchtold called a second ministerial council the next day, July 14, at which an agreement was reached on the main points to be demanded. Tisza was persuaded to give up his opposition to the short time-limit of forty-eight hours, on condition that before the ultimatum was presented, a full ministerial council should adopt the formal resolution that "Austria, aside from slight regulations of boundary, seeks no acquisition of territory as a result of the war with Serbia". It was also decided that the ultimatum should not be presented until it was certain that Poincaré had left Russia; for otherwise it was feared that it might be regarded in Petrograd as an affront. Then Russia, under the influence of the "champagne mood" of the Franco-Russian toasts and the chauvinism of Poincaré, Izvolski, and the Grand-duke Nicholas, would be more likely to intervene with military action.⁶⁶ After the date had been changed several times, it was finally decided that if the note were not presented until after five P.M. Thursday, July 23, the news could not reach Petrograd until after Poincaré was safely out of touch with the Russian authorities.⁶⁷ After the council Berchtold informed Tschirschky that the exact text of the ultimatum had not been fixed. But he promised that as soon as the precise wording had been finally adopted at a third ministerial council on Sunday, July 19, he (Tschirschky) would be shown a copy in great confidence, even before it had been submitted to Francis Joseph for approval.⁶⁸ Berchtold, however, did not keep this promise. The precise terms of the note were fixed as planned on July 19,⁶⁹ and its text despatched on the 20th by courier to the Austrian ambassador at Belgrade for presentation to the Serbian government on Thursday, the 23d.⁷⁰ On the 21st, Berchtold went to Ischl, for an audience with Francis Joseph. He telegraphed to his subordinate in

⁶⁶ Minutes of the ministerial council, July 14. *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 19; *Kautsky Docs.*, nos. 49, 50.

⁶⁷ For the high importance of waiting until Russia had recovered from the "champagne mood" and Poincaré's influence, see *Red Book*, vol. I., nos. 19, 21; *Kautsky Docs.*, nos. 50, 65, 69, 80, 93, 96, 108, 112, 127.

⁶⁸ *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 50.

⁶⁹ *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 26; Gooss, p. 101.

⁷⁰ *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 27. It was sent also under the seal of secrecy to Szögyény on the 20th, as well as to the Austrian ambassadors in Rome, Paris, Petrograd, London, and Constantinople. *Ibid.*, no. 29.

Vienna, Macchio, that His Majesty had approved the note without change; "inform Tschirschky that he cannot be given the note until tomorrow, because there are some corrections to be made in it".⁷¹ Berchtold probably feared that even the Berlin Foreign Office would disapprove the extreme and intransigent tone of the note, and might at the last moment stretch out a restraining hand. Therefore Berlin must not know the text until it was too late to do anything.

But meanwhile Berlin had been sending pressing telegrams to know the text of the note as soon as possible, "as it was of vital interest to the German government to know where the Austrian path was leading to".⁷² Under this pressure from Berlin, and in ignorance of Berchtold's order to Macchio, Count Forgách, on the evening of July 21, handed the text of the note in strictest confidence to Tschirschky for transmission to Berlin. Tschirschky sent it by mail instead of by telegraph, either because it was so long and the wires were overcrowded, or because he feared that its later publication might endanger the secrecy of the German cipher. It did not reach Berlin until the evening of July 22. It was then practically too late for Bethmann and Jagow to modify it.⁷³ That, however, they actually would have modified it, if they had had the opportunity, is not to be assumed. They were still adhering to the policy adopted on July 5, that the Serbian question was "beyond the competence of Germany" and was to be "localized". Thus it was essentially true, as they soon asserted to the world, that they did not know of the text of the note before it was sent to Serbia, and they had not shared in drawing it up.⁷⁴

⁷¹ *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 46.

⁷² Private letter of Szögyény to Berchtold, July 21, Gooss, p. 110, note 2. Cf. his telegram on same day: "Unconditionally necessary to inform German government before other Powers at first in a strictly confidential manner." *Red Book*, vol. I., no. 39. Cf. also telegrams of Jagow to Tschirschky urgently requesting (July 19) "essential points of the note", and again (July 21) "to be precisely informed beforehand not only as to the contents of the note, but also as to the day and hour of its publication". *Kautsky Docs.*, nos. 77, 83.

⁷³ *Kautsky Docs.*, nos. 103, 106. Bethmann, *Betrachtungen*, p. 138 ff., says the text was shown to Jagow late in the evening of July 22; Jagow had just received a copy of it from Szögyény, to whom it had been sent on July 20. Jagow declared it was "too sharp" and reproached the Austrian ambassador for thus communicating it only at the eleventh hour. Jagow, *Ursachen*, p. 109 ff., confirms this. As a commentary on Jagow's veracity, however, it may be noted that on the day after he had read the note and pronounced it too sharp, he telegraphed both to Lichnowsky and to the German ambassador in Sweden, "Austria's demands at Belgrade are unknown to us". *Kautsky Docs.*, nos. 123, 126.

⁷⁴ Tschirschky, however, of course had been kept informed in a general way of its progress through the ministerial councils of July 7, 14, and 19. *Kautsky Docs.*, nos. 19, 29, 65, 87, 88, 103, 106.

Berchtold's further acts rendering war inevitable may be briefly noted. On July 25, upon the advice of the Austrian chief-of-staff and without waiting to examine the nature of the Serbian reply, Austria mobilized her army against Serbia, to be ready to cross the frontier on the 28th.⁷⁵ On July 27, Berchtold decided to declare war very soon, "primarily in order to cut the ground from every attempt at intervention".⁷⁶

Meanwhile Grey's first proposal for mediation at Petrograd and Vienna by the four less directly interested powers (Germany, Italy, France, and England) was being rejected by Germany on the alleged ground that she could not bring her ally before a court of arbitration.⁷⁷ But when Sir Edward Grey made a second proposal on July 27 that Germany should urge Vienna to refrain from military action and regard the Serbian answer as sufficient or as a basis for further negotiation, Bethmann at last wavered in his optimism about "localization" and tried to recover control over the situation which he had abandoned on July 5.⁷⁸ He notified Berchtold that after rejecting Grey's first proposal, he could not reject the second;

If we should refuse all mediatory action we should be held responsible by the world as the instigators of the war. This would make our own position at home in Germany impossible, where we must appear to be forced into war. Our situation is all the more difficult as Serbia has apparently made very wide concessions. We cannot therefore reject the role of mediator . . . request Berchtold's opinion on the English proposal and also on Sazonov's wish for direct negotiations with Vienna.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Gooss, p. 172.

⁷⁶ Tschirschky to Berlin, July 27, 3:30 P.M. *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 257.

⁷⁷ *Dipl. Corresp.*, pp. 17, 18, 38, 40.

⁷⁸ It is noteworthy that Berchtold delayed sending to Berlin the text of Serbia's reply for several days. He evidently feared that its conciliatory and yielding tone might lead Germany, as it did all the other powers of Europe, to feel that Austria's demands were sufficiently satisfied and that grounds for an attack on Serbia were now no longer justifiable. It was not until Berlin requested urgently that the Serbian reply be forwarded, that it was sent and then only in a form in which it was interlarded with arguments drawn up in Vienna. Before it had reached Berlin, the Serbian ambassador had already brought it to the Foreign Office, and the Kaiser noted upon it: "A brilliant result for a time-limit of only 48 hours. That is more than one might have expected! A great moral victory for Vienna; but with it every ground for war disappears, and Giesl ought to have remained quiet in Belgrade. In such circumstances I should never have ordered mobilization!" *Kautsky Docs.*, nos. 246, 271, 280; cf. also no. 293; *Dipl. Corresp.*, p. 41.

⁷⁹ Bethmann to Tschirschky, July 27, 11:50 P.M. *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 279; Gooss, p. 177 ff. This was followed by another telegram on the 28th, warning Berchtold almost in threatening tone to come to some understanding with Russia through the direct negotiations which Germany had proposed in Petrograd. *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 323.

Bethmann also had the Kaiser send his first appeal to the tsar: "I am exerting my utmost influence to induce the Austrians to deal straightly to arrive to [*sic*] a satisfactory understanding with you. I confidently hope you will help me in my efforts to smoothe over difficulties that may still arise. Your very sincere and devoted friend and cousin, Willy."⁸⁰ Whether Bethmann's chief anxiety at this moment was really to avoid war, or to make sure that when war came, the blame for it should not seem to rest on Germany and Austria but on Russia, cannot here be discussed. At any rate Berchtold destroyed the possibility of reaching a peaceful solution. Instead of replying to Bethmann, he declared war on Serbia at noon on the 28th. For more than two whole days Bethmann could get no answer from him, in spite of several urgent telegrams. Bethmann was really "pressing the button" hard at Vienna, as he declared to Sir Edward Grey, but Berchtold was 'deaf'.⁸¹ It was not until the morning of July 30 that he was finally informed by Berchtold that "to his sorrow" he could not act on Grey's proposal, because, war having begun with Serbia, the proposal was "outstripped by events".⁸² Meanwhile, owing to the suspicions caused by the rejection of all the English and Russian proposals for a peaceful settlement and owing to the increasing rumors in every country of military preparations, the control was passing at Berlin and Petrograd from the hands of the diplomats to those of the military authorities. Steps, which cannot here be described, were being taken, as a result of Berchtold's uncompromising attitude, which rendered a European war virtually inevitable.

Thus, though we may reject many of the views maintained by Gooss, we may conclude that his interpretation of the responsibility for the war up to July 29 is much nearer the truth than Kautsky's or than that set forth at Versailles by the Allied Commission of which Mr. Lansing was a member. On July 5 Bethmann agreed with the Kaiser that Austria should be given a free hand for a speedy but undetermined action against Serbia. Neither thought it probable that

⁸⁰ July 28, 10:45 P.M. *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 325.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 323, 361, 377, 380, 384, 385, 395; *Dipl. Corresp.*, pp. 56-65. Cf. for instance, Bethmann to Tschirschky, July 29, 8 P.M.: After complaining sharply of Austria's uncompromising and contradictory declarations in Petrograd, London, and Rome, Bethmann says he is forced to conclude that Austria has new intentions of partitioning Serbia contrary to her former assurances that she did not intend to seize Serbian territory; and that Austria is concealing her intentions from Germany for fear Germany would not support them. *Kautsky Docs.*, no. 361.

⁸² *Kautsky Docs.*, nos. 388, 400, 432.

the action would involve a European war. By adopting the policy that the Serbian question was a purely Austrian affair, "beyond the competence" of Germany, and by promising loyal support as an ally, they believed with a wholly unwarranted optimism that the Austro-Serbian conflict could be "localized". Berchtold, being given a free hand and sure of the support of his ally, then went recklessly ahead, disregarding German advice and failing to keep the German Foreign Office precisely informed "where the Austrian path was leading to". He thereby created a situation in which the Central Powers became so involved and in which so many steps toward mobilization were taken, that "localization" was no longer possible. When at last Bethmann made an effort to restrain Austria it was too late. Though Tschirschky, holding militarist views himself and representing the attitude of the Kaiser rather than of Bethmann and the German Foreign Office, cast his influence for energetic action against Serbia, he did not push on a hesitating Berchtold. Berchtold needed no pushing. He was eager to be free from German restraint and sure of German support; and it was precisely these things which he was so foolishly promised on July 5.⁸³

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⁸³ After correcting the proof of the foregoing article I received a copy of the proceedings of the Reichstag Investigating Committee of last March (*Beilagen zu den Stenographischen Berichten über die Oeffentlichen Verhandlungen des Untersuchungsausschusses: Zur Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, Nr. 1). These depositions of some forty personages confirm the conclusions which I had already reached. They tend to exonerate Tschirschky more than I have done. They also show that Falkenhayn, Prussian minister of war, with a couple of subordinates, Plessen and Lyncker, conferred for a few minutes with the Kaiser at Potsdam on the afternoon of July 5, but with no one else, and no military measures were then taken indicative of any expectation that Germany would be involved in war.